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RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 0039  
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OAS, JO

SUBJECT: FIRST UNSCR 1540 OUTREACH IN ARAB REGION PROMOTES  
IMPLEMENTATION DIALOGUE

UNSCR 1540 Workshop in Amman  
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¶1. (U) Summary. The Regional Seminar, "Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) for Arab States," took place on 4-5 September 2007 in Amman, Jordan. Jordan hosted the workshop jointly with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UN ODA) in close cooperation with the United States as co-sponsor along with the EU and Norway. A total of 44 participants from states in the region, international and regional organizations, and states from outside the region attended the workshop.

¶2. (U) This workshop was carried out within a similar framework as outreach activities in 2006 that took place in China, Ghana, and Lima. The focus of this workshop was on furthering implementation (as all but one of the Arab countries in attendance had submitted a report) and encouragement for the Arab region to increase its commitment to the obligations of UNSCR 1540. Themes proposed since the United States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) held a 1540 Workshop were repeated by the 1540 Chair Ambassador Burian and several delegations. Although the Arab region has just now hosted its first event, the choice of location and timing permitted a useful dialogue. The DOE/Sandia-funded Cooperative Monitoring Center (CMC) created an atmosphere which focused on implementation. A representative of the Arab League (Mr. Abdallah Kailani) took careful note of the OSCE example, as well as the first agenda presentation focused on proliferation financing at a UN-sponsored workshop by the Middle East & North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF). See paragraph 7 for way ahead observations. End summary.

13. (U) The workshop served as the first regional forum to focus on implementation as called for in UNSCR 1673 (which extended the work of the 1540 Committee for two years). The workshop had seven sessions: Session I - Status of UNSC Resolution 1540 Reporting and Implementation Globally and in the Arab Region; Session II -- National Experiences in Implementation of Nonproliferation Treaties and UNSCR 1540; Session III - Roles for Intergovernmental Organizations (IAEA, OPCW, WCO); Session IV - Role for Regional Intergovernmental Organizations; Session V - Implementation and Assistance Planning for UNSCR 1540; Session VI - Assistance requests, and Session VII Themes, Priorities, and Next Steps. The full texts of presentations are available from the UN 1540 Coordinator as well as from the United Nations.

14. (U) In opening remarks, Ms. Hannelore Hoppe of UN ODA reminded participants that: implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004) is a long-term and continual process; there was a continuing need to share experiences on the issue of weapons of mass destruction; concrete challenges exist with respect to the implementation of the resolution; and UN ODA remains firmly committed to furthering international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments by working with the 1540 Committee. 1540 Committee Chair Burian noted: the timeliness of the workshop; his belief that the discussion would support further work in the Arab League or other regional organizations; the need for assistance in the preparation of plans of action; and the Committee's interest in helping to serve as a clearinghouse for assistance in implementation of the established obligations of the resolution. Ambassador Hale and the other co-sponsors provided remarks and reinforced these themes.

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15. (U) The liveliest discussion took place on day 2 when the provisions for developing road maps and assistance were discussed. Delegations welcomed the interventions by the United States and Norway on ways to obtain technical assistance. Moreover, the examples cited from previous workshops and the overview of possible assistance programs prompted interesting exchanges by representatives from Libya, Morocco, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab League. Danish Ambassador Bernhard from the OSCE's Forum for Security Cooperation welcomed the interest in working with the Arab League to increase regional awareness. NOTE: CMC later distributed in Arabic the Organization of American States (OAS) 1540 regional resolution adopted in June, 2007. End note.

16. (SBU) Jordan, Libya, Egypt, Comoros, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon all took the floor at various times, with three general themes being noted. First, although all countries agreed that WMD proliferation is a threat, they emphasized to varying degrees the difficult nuclear issue in the region because of Israel's presumed possession of nuclear weapons. Second, since the region strives to be a nuclear free zone, participants focused on effective controls related to chemical, biological, and means of delivery through export and border controls. And third, while the Arab League could serve as a useful forum, the outstanding nuclear issues made an agreement along the lines of the OAS's more challenging. COMMENT: Prior to the workshop, post and 1540 Coordinator met with the Head of the Intentional Organizations Department of the Jordanian MFA, Mr. Ayman Aamiry, who echoed similar themes. He indicated that Jordan was happy to serve as the host at this first event, but urged the United States to focus next on other regional states - specifically suggesting Egypt. His comments were reinforced as Egypt provided the only politically charged statement of the workshop: the Egyptian representative, Mr. Aly Sirry, Director, Department of Disarmament Affairs, chose to focus on issues often raised by Indonesia, South Africa and non-aligned states questioning the legitimacy of a Security Council-imposed resolution. End comment.

17. (U) During a private post-workshop discussion with the Committee Chair, Ambassador Burian indicated to the 1540 Coordinator his view that the workshop exceeded his expectations. Aside from the Egyptian intervention noted in paragraph 6, he thought the CMC (as a Jordanian nongovernmental organization) helped to focus the discussion on practical implementation and not on broader political issues. He lamented the Norwegian and EU practice of sponsoring but not actively working to shape the agenda or outcome - while recognizing that neither are members of the Committee itself. He also welcomed the first participation of the World Customs Organization from its headquarters in Brussels and the MENAFATF presentation. Last, Burian noted his time as Chair would end soon, and Washington should start considering possible next steps for the Chair and the Committee.

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Hale